

# THE CORRESPONDENT.

---

MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

---

EDITED BY GEORGE HOUSTON.

---

No. 10.

NEW-YORK, SEPTEMBER 27, 1828.

VOL. 4.

---

## CORRESPONDENCE.

---

### WATSON REFUTED.

---

#### LETTER V.

There have been various suppositions upon the meaning of the names mentioned in Genesis. Adam has been said to signify, in many parts of Asia, the first part of the week ; and Enoch, the seventh successor of Adam, to be the same with Saturn, or the seventh day. Thus Assur, Elam, Lud, Madai, Javan, and Tiras, which are said to be the founders of the Assyrians, the Elamites, the Lydians, the Medes, the Ionians, and the Thracians, may very probably be nothing else than the enunciation of the names of these countries ; for, between Assur and Assyria, or Lud and Lydia, there is not a very great difference. We know that Egypt is by the Arabs called *Masr*, which has the same consonants with the Hebrew *Misraim*, whose pleural termination implies properly the inhabitants of Egypt. In the Bible, *Misraim* is called the founder of that kingdom. We also know that Syria is called *Barrel-sham*, or the country to the left. The inhabitants of Thebaid are called the sons of Cush. Again, we find several names of towns very much resembling those of the supposed founders of these monarchies ; Sur, or Tyre, is not unlike Assur. These are conjectures ; I pretend to found nothing upon them ; but, at least, they are probable. Your Genesis on the contrary, as it is commonally explained, contains palpable lies. It supposes a deluge, which neither did nor could take place ; it destroys the human race, when we know that nations were then in existence. Lastly, it talks of the founders of nations, which existed long before that period. But, even had Genesis been written at the time of Moses, it might be worth while to inquire into the import of his genealogies ; but, being a very modern compilation, collected by an ignorant people, partly from tradition, partly from scattered and mutilated records, it does not deserve the serious attention of the philosopher.

You next attempt to justify the conduct of God towards the Canaanites, whose great crime was to defend their own country, and to adore their own Gods instead of the God of the Jews. When a man makes an apology for such conduct, we only can answer by an appeal to the feelings of men, from which alone we derive notions of humanity. It

was natural for the adorers of a Phenician Jehovah to be the enemies of the Babylonish Baal ; both these Gods sprang from the wild fancies of men. The jealous God of the Jews, the all-wise, omnipotent and benevolent, could not convert the worshippers of another God, without exterminating whole nations, even to the little children ; but this barbarous mandate came from the priests, who have in all countries, and all systems of religion, adopted this method of conversion. You state, that Moses " gave an order that the boys and women should be put to death ; but, that the young maidens should be kept alive for themselves ;" and that you " see nothing in the proceeding, but good policy combined with mercy. The young men might have become dangerous avengers of what they would esteem their country's wrongs ; the mothers might have again allured the Israelites to the love of licentious pleasures, and the practice of idolatry, and brought another plague upon the congregation ; but the young maidens, not being polluted by the flagitious habits of their mothers, not likely to create disturbances by rebellion were kept alive : " and you add " that the women children were not reserved for the purposes of debauchery, but of slavery ; a custom, (you acknowledge) abhorrent from our manner, but every where practiced in former times, and still preserved in countries where the benignity of the christian religion has not softened the ferocity of human nature." Is extermination an example of the mercy of priests and of their God ; " whose justice is subservient to mercy,"—" whose punishments originate in his abhorrence to sin,"—and whose commands to massacre, to butcher, and to exterminate, " are only benevolent warnings ?"

You dare Mr. Paine to prove, that the young women were kept for debauchery ; and you triumphantly add, " that if he does, you will allow Moses to be the horrid monster he describes him, and the bible a book of lies, wickedness, and blasphemy." Do you think, that consigning to slavery thirty-two thousand maids, is consistent with the benignity of God ? I do not hesitate to consider this worse than merely making them the partners of licentious pleasures. But, in what consisted the wonted wisdom of a God, whom you describe as ever solicitous to lessen sin ? Let me ask you if the young women were not as liable to incite the passions of the Jews as their mothers ; and whether their slavery would not increase the opportunities for debauchery ? Could it be consistent with humanity, much less with the mercy of an all-powerful God, to put to death all the boys of a nation, merely because they might in time revenge the insolent invaders of their country ? Were all the male children polluted from their birth ? It would have been easy for them to convert them to another religion ; but to your God it was impossible. The bloody invaders of America pursued not another plan, even after the " benignity of the christian religion softened the ferocity of human nature." Have these christian invaders any where respected the chastity of women when they made them slaves ? And have the Jews, God's chosen nation, at any period, either while under his protection, or since he abandoned them, shewn themselves more virtuously inclined than other people ? Were they ever prevented by the striking manifestations of his mercy, his power, and his justice, from going away to adore other Gods, and falling into all sorts of wickedness ?

In short, if the bishop rests his defence of Moses and the Bible upon this passage, I am willing to appeal to the judgment of all mankind. If any person can believe it consistent with the benevolence of Omnipotence, to sacrifice whole nations to be massacred and plundered by a few hordes of bloody Jews ; if he can think this to be part of a grand scheme for the good of mankind, he must give up all pretensions to reason, common sense, and humanity. But it is time the world should see, that this holy book the bible, " which, in weight of authority, and extent of utility, exceeds all the libraries of the philosophers," contains pretences for all bad actions, and stifles the laws of humanity and morality. Upon this book have inquisitors, crusaders, and religious men, founded pretences for the most diabolical persecutions, avowedly undertaken for the express purpose of unrooting infidelity, and for the glory of the Lord. Every man who reads the word of God, is warranted to reason thus : God has ordered murder and robbery ; he has instigated his favorite people to exterminate whole nations ; therefore I can do no better than to imitate the Almighty ; and every crusader may pretend to have the same authority from God as Moses ; and miracles are never wanting to prove it. Because Abraham was a pimp, and his wife a prostitute, so may any person be without losing the patronage of the God of Abraham. Every man, in short may imitate the meek Moses, the humane David, without fearing to incur the displeasure of the Almighty. Thus Ravaiillac thought he was doing as holy a deed, when he attempted the life of Henry, as Dominic, or Torquemada, when butchering the wretched heretics, who had the misfortune to fall a prey to their bloody zeal.

The whole Old Testament is so filled with barbarous stories, that if they did not excite laughter by their improbability, they would freeze the blood of any man endowed with humanity. What an irksome task have those undertaken, who have attempted to reconcile the horrible crimes of the Jews with the mercy and wisdom of the Creator ? Has ferocity forsaken christians as you insinuate ? Have the modern religious fanatics yielded in cruelty to the Jews ? Those two religions have successively inundated the earth with the blood of innocent victims.—Have not the followers of Christ constantly preached passive obedience to the church, have they not frequently relieved the people of their oaths, and have they not fomented most of the civil wars that laid waste all Europe ? It is well that priests have not been able to persuade mankind of late that the minister was the oracle of God. The pride and foolishness of science has put this out of their power ; they cannot lead nations as they did the Jews ; we are not so easily persuaded of the immediate manifestations of God's commands to the priest. We know science too well to believe that the pillar of fire that went before the Israelites, was God himself. We might have shewn the people, that a pan with red hot substances would have the appearance of a fire by night, and a cloud of smoke by day, a custom practised from time immemorial, by the caravans. Although, my lord, the wisdom of God may be foolishness to man, I acknowledge I am neither fond of crediting absurdities, nor have I so much faith as to take the work of priests for supernatural mandates of providence. When they speak in their

usual senseless and unintelligible language, I conclude that it is either to dazzle the ignorant multitude, or I look upon their dreams as the consequence of dire superstition, the first effect of which is to make us unacquainted with ourselves, under the imposing aspect of familiarising us with imaginary beings. At the conclusion of my remarks upon the Old Testament, I shall give a few extracts from those books, wherein my readers may see the character of the Jews and their God in glaring colours, and judge whether any honest man would not tremble at the thoughts of having done as much injustice, and committed such atrocities as this Jehovah.

### QUERIES TO CHRISTIANS.

*Cristians*—Let me ask you, with a warm and honest zeal for the destruction of erroneous principles, and the discovery and propagation of true knowledge, from whence does your knowledge of the existence of, and your obligation to God and to Christ emanate? Is it from a source pure and divine, unsullied by the arts and vile imperfections of our own natures? Is it from innate perception? Is it through any agency, which bears within itself evidence of its divine origin? Is it from works which bear testimony of an omnipotent, all-wise, and all merciful creator? Have you, in fact, any proof? Are not all your beliefs based upon mere theory? Is the bible a proof? Does it bear evidence of divinity? Does it not bear internal proof of the age and state of civilization in which it had its origin? Is it not filled with the most palpable contradictions and absurdities in religion, moral precepts, and historical facts? By whom are you taught to believe in the divinity of Christ? And *when* are you taught? Have not these beliefs been instilled into your young and credulous minds, by parents who were as credulous as yourselves? Have not they been enjoined and enforced, when your minds were incapable of correct judgment, before the powers of reasoning were matured; and so strongly implanted in your natures as in a great measure to reject all opinions that are at variance with your own, however superior their claims may be to truth and credit?

Who was the author of your religion? Was he a person who ever professed himself to be God? Has he left works by which his divinity can be attested? Were not his disciples the most ignorant and credulous persons that could be found in the mob; incapable of detecting the cunning and artifice of their master? If it be true that these *miracles*, attested by the evangelists, were wrought by Christ, and in the open world, why was it that none but the poor and ignorant gave credence to them, and deified their author? The reasons which you would advance in similar cases, where prejudice and deity were not concerned, would be, that the well informed part of the community being able to discover the artifice by which Christ imposed upon the more ignorant and credulous spectators, declared him an impostor; while the ignorant, incapable of detecting fraud, looked on him as a being inspired by deity with the power of working miracles; or as some inferior deity, sent on earth to alleviate their miseries, and to restore to them their liberties, which had been taken from them by the Romans. How often do we see similar instances recorded in history; even in the history of our



own times: I have now by me a work entitled "Christ's second appearance," where are a large number of miracles recorded, solemnly attested by men who are still living. Do you believe them because others have sworn to their truth; and because they are said to be performed through the divine inspiration of Christ? Do you not declare them either frauds or falsehoods? You cannot help allowing them to have a greater claim to credence than those said to be performed by Christ himself, eighteen hundred years ago; because men, the lower classes, the followers of Christ, were then more ignorant, and of course less likely to detect errors, and more likely to exaggerate than at the present time; and because, too, the attestations of the former coming directly from the witnesses themselves to us; from men too who are well informed; have not been subject to be altered, changed and modified, as the miracles of Christ are known to been in the course of eighteen centuries, by interested and selfish persons. I will resume the subject at some future time.

CATO.

*Athens, Sept. 14, 1828.*

SIR. When we get into a *hobble*, it is creditable to our intellect to seem to know it; and it is no less creditable to our moral sense, honestly to acknowledge our embarrassment. The following very honest illustration of the contradictions which the scriptures *force us into*, may, in fact, be found with little variation, in all the sermons of all the Christian sectarians either of ancient or modern growth.

#### SERMON.

My Brethren, the scripture tells us we must work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Now, my friends, fear and trembling are positive qualifications in working out our salvation.

But, the scripture tells us, that the love of God casteth out from the sinner all fear; which means, I suppose, that before he gets this love of God, the poor sinner may feel so solicitous about it, that he will tremble and shake in his shoes, as it were. This, my friends and hearers, is no child's play, but hard work. To loose half of ones strength by fear, at a time when all our natural strength would be insufficient, is, as it were, putting a rat in a box to fight with a cat. But my friends it must be done, or we must be fried in the great frying-pan of hell, with the devil to pitch us about,—the very thoughts of which you know, is enough to make us exert ourselves even if we do tremble.

But, my friends, of yourselves you can do nothing.

And yet, you must try, you know, until you tremble; for trembling you will recollect, is a good sign. But the scripture says, that you cannot even pray aright for help without the spirit first moving you to do so. Well then if you cannot try; at least you must try to try; and then if you do not succeed, you may perhaps have some excuse for a failure. But you will perhaps answer me, with those texts of the holy scripture, which speak of our being in the hands of God, as clay in the hands of the potter; making some of us vessels of honor, and some vessels of dishonor—of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, so that he might be punished—of the hating and loving of children, even before they were born, &c.

In answer to which, my friends, all I can tell you is, that you had better be on the safe side of the hedge, and if you can't try to try, why *to make short work with a long story*, I advise you by all means, to TRY TO TRY TO TRY.

Now, my friends, you must know, I am no common preacher. I ask no salary from your purses. If you are a patient flock, yet I will not *fleece you*. But I will shear the wool of truth from the lamb of the New Testament. And if the fleece be short or coarse or even tangled, you must be contented.

My friends the scriptures are full of difficulties, and may be compared to a deep pool with truth at the bottom. Now I am a man of but middling stature; yet I dare venture into the pool. I never skim the surface but go directly to the bottom; and if, instead of bringing up truth from the bottom of the pool, I shall be found only to stir up the mud, I can answer only for my intentions. But my friends there is one thing to comfort you; I never stay long at a time in these depths. By this means I save both my strength and your patience, Amen. L. O.

*September 8th, 1828.*

---

**NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1828.**

---

A LECTURE,

DELIVERED AT THE FREE PRESS ASSOCIATION,

*On Liberty.*—By a Member.

---

As we can no longer shut our eyes to the fact, that extensive and powerful combinations are forming in the bosom of this community to carry every thing in church and state, by a system of religious persecution, every exertion should be made to enlighten public opinion in regard to the origin of such measures, the fallacy of the reasonings by which they are pretended to be supported, and their real tendencies. There is no obscurity over the origin and history of these and similar usurpations.—Men have always been willing that every one should think as he pleases, so long as he will please to think as they do; and this, especially when the clergy have been called in to decide the question, has commonly been the extent of their notions of religious liberty. Every sect has preached up just enough of liberality to answer its own purposes; that is to say, just enough to secure an indulgence to its own deviations from the traditionary faith. But farther than this, almost every one has agreed, that liberality must be a very dangerous thing. All have allowed a certain latitude for thinking, within which liberty may be enjoyed; but if any one should go beyond this, though in the exercise of the same liberty, he is to be regarded and treated as an outcast and an infidel.

Acting on this principle, the Catholics began their exclusive system; that is, they allowed a certain latitude of thinking to the members of their communion, but fixed a mark, beyond which, if any one went, he was to be regarded and treated as an apostate. The protestants, as one

man, complained of this as a most unrighteous measure, while they were suffering under it ; but no sooner had they become established as an independent church, than they adopted the same course themselves. They also not only allowed a certain latitude to the members of their communion, but fixed a mark, beyond which, if any one went, though in the exercise of that very liberty on which protestantism was founded, he was to be regarded and treated as an apostate. The consequence was, that each protestant sect, as it fell away from the main body received precisely the same treatment from those who called themselves orthodox among the protestants ; that is the protestant majority, which the first protestants had received from those who called themselves orthodox amongst the catholics ; that is the catholic majority.

In process of time, however, the protestant body became broken up into sects to such a degree, that no one sect retained sufficient power to to over-awe the rest. Some sects, meanwhile, had arisen who from the freedom of their opinions, or the honesty with which they avowed them, made themselves peculiarly obnoxious, not to one sect only, but to several sects ; upon which these several sects, finding themselves unable to accomplish their object single handed, were disposed to forget their former differences, and unite their strength in the hope, that by such a combination, they might better succeed in hunting down the common enemy. It is not long since the great body of the orthodox attempted to cry down the baptists ; then the methodists ; and after that the schism arose, between what are called the old fashioned Calvinists, and the Hopkinsians. But these differences are kept out of sight now that a common object of dread has arisen. It may be remarked, however, that these sects in their present combination, can hardly say any thing so bad of us, as they used to say of one another.

We will examine the leading assumption on which they attempt to defend themselves. It is agreed by all that a certain latitude of thinking and expression must be expected and allowed ; but say thy limits must be set—"thus far shalt thou go and no farther," and farther, that they are vested with authority to set limits and alter them at pleasure. Each sect may deny that I am of that sect : the methodist that I am a methodist, &c. and do no wrong—for this depends upon my according with the authorized formularies of the sect, and the sect that made them is competent to decide—to apply them. But if on the strength of this, any sect or any number of sects presume to infringe on my rights of citizenship, this is doing what they have no right to do. When my right of giving evidence in court, or of my employing my time is touched, it interferes with those rights secured by the constitution, and fixed by nature. If this is yielded, what next will it be ? Why the right of property, of voting, of holding offices. No man will be allowed to hold property, to vote at elections, to hold an office unless he believes in the holy christian religion. It requires but a step to go from one of these to the other ; and surely if the civil or judicial authorities possess the power to abridge a citizen of his right of giving evidence in court, on account of his religion, or of prescribing to him how he shall or shall not use his leisure time, they cannot but have the same power of taking from him his property, both personal and real. In fact, it does that same thing, for if he cannot give evidence he cannot go through those formalities

which secure him his property ; neither can he go through those which enable him to vote if challenged, and even to take the oaths of office if elected. Thus all the rights, privileges and enjoyments of citizenship are swept off by the religious test act, and a man might as well be under the despotism of Europe. Yes, unless a man believes, or says he believes, that *some* of his fellow beings are to suffer pain and misery in a state where time shall have no end (and where it will have an end no one knows) he is deprived of all that makes him a free man. No matter if he believes that he is himself to be happy forever and for aye ; he is not questioned on that, but he must think or believe that some will lay under the ban of the eternal judge. Of his personal property he is deprived by that ordinance which prevents him from employing a seventh portion of his time for his support and that of his family. It obliges him to spend money when he is not earning it.

The fact of my citizenship cannot depend upon my being a christian ; and while I concede to the christian the right to interpret and apply his *own* books for himself, no claim to authority or infallibility in their application to me can be acknowledged. It is true, I differ from him ; but not more than he differs from me ; consequently he cannot pretend to any degree of authority and infallibility, which I may not pretend to with just as much reason.

But, suppose these christians could prove on authority, who among the different sects are we to look for a guide ? Oh, say the catholics, to us ; *we* have determined at the council of Trent. No, says the Lutherans, *we* have determined it in the confession of Augsburg. Not at all, not at all, say the Calvinists, *we* settled it at the Synod of Dort, and then in the Westminster assembly. By no means, says the church of England, the appeal must be made to the 39 articles—and so we may go to Methodists, Baptists, Reformed Dutch, the Universalists, Unitarians, &c. I have often thought that supposing I were converted to christianity, how I should proceed to ascertain who is right in all these sects. It would take a long life to examine the whole of their controversies and hear both sides of the question ; and without it, I could not come to any conclusion, or establish my faith satisfactorily ; consequently I might spend my lifetime in inquiry, and, as no doubt many do, die at last unsatisfied. For want of one consideration, to inquire if the source and foundation of all of them is worthy of credit, many have been led along indifferent or thoughtless. This, these sectarians, who arrogate to themselves so much infallibility, from which they exclude every one else, never think of. Sure that they are the exclusive favorites of heaven, they stop not to inquire if heaven has any favorites, or what evidence there are of such ; neither do they consider that no one sect can pretend to an infallibility which every other sect may not claim with as much reason, and buoyed up by their own vanity in their controversies for their divine religion, they forget that they are only a party to it, and not party and umpire too. Instead of convincing me that I am wrong, they take that for granted without attempting to prove it, but shape their conduct accordingly. It may be said that it is matter of opinion and sincere conviction on their part ; nay, it may be contended, that this is one of these interesting questions on which a man cannot help making up an opinion on one side or the



other, and after his opinion is made up, to deny him the right to express it, would not be to secure but to destroy liberty. It may be asked, whether this is not a subject on which a man in a free country may hold and avow his honest convictions? Certainly he may, so long as he can do it without interfering with the rights of others. It will hardly be pretended, however, that the declaration of an opinion, merely as an opinion is always allowable, when this declaration, true or false, must injure others—when they have the effect to prejudice the community against them, to have them denounced as unworthy of public confidence, of enjoying his rights of citizenship, for religious opinions, it is not enough to say in justification, that they speak as they think. But, the fact is, they do not consider these as matters of opinion; if they did, they would endeavor to defend them. No, they consider their creeds as established truths which no one is at liberty to examine, reject, or even to doubt; to prevent which they arm themselves with the power of civil authority, to avoid which all must see as they see, whose understandings are not darkened by moral prejudice. Their language is accordingly in the highest degree confident and overbearing, and owes not a little of its effect on the credulous and timid, to this circumstance. These men act on their opinions as though they were established truths, and this, too, when they know that the feelings, reputation, and substantial interests of others are compromised thereby. Forgetting their fallibility, they act towards others and to the prejudice of others, precisely as though they thought themselves infallible.

It will be said, again, if they think their neighbour unworthy of confidence, that on the strength of that opinion they are at liberty to withhold their confidence and society, as their confidence and society are at their own disposal; and so they are, so far as their private business goes. But when they come to interfere with public rights, and rights of property, it is another thing. They may farther, think their neighbour unworthy of confidence, and a dangerous member of the community; and, on the strength of that opinion, may feel called upon to denounce him publicly, to induce others to withhold their confidence and society; and this, too, they may do in cases provided for by the laws and rules of society where the accused may have an opportunity to justify himself and establish his innocence, if innocent. But this, even, is very different from the assumption of that authority by which a man is deprived of his rights and privileges at once, without even the power to defend himself—which even deprives him of this power, which if he attempts to assert he is not heard, or is imprisoned for contempt of court without the privilege of appeal. This will hardly be called an act of conscience, but rather an act of unauthorized prejudice, a pre-judging of the question; an anticipation of the law: and whether the opponent is right or wrong, is an infraction of civil rights; and the saying that we may appeal to the tribunal of public opinion is but an attempt to answer and blind us by a mere figure of speech. Much is said about the matter of conscience, as though conscience, which after all, is but a knowledge and fear of public opinion, would justify a man in acting upon his opinion to injure the public rights and private property, the comfort and happiness of another. Perhaps he may say he cannot help holding that opinion, right or

wrong; but he can help acting upon it, and he is, in fact, bound in conscience not to act on it, when it so interferes with others; and in fact no man is authorized to decide this question until the infallibility of his nature is established, especially when the compact of society, of which the constitution is the ground work and guide, protects those rights with which this pretended operation of conscience interferes. If, therefore, hurried on by his passions or prejudices, he neglects to do this, I may admit that he is sincere, but I cannot see how he can be said to have consulted his own conscience, and much less that conscience laid a necessity on him to act in this manner. Though not disposed always to doubt the sincerity of our opponents, it must be remarked that the protestations of the party concerned is not always the best evidence of sincerity; and there is hardly any virtue in which men are more liable to self-deception.

Besides, what is there in this plea of conscience which will not justify, at the same time, almost every measure of usurpation, injustice or cruelty, that has ever been attempted under the name of religion? Under this plea, utter extermination was decreed against the Abigenses in France, and afterwards against the Lollards, in England; the English Protestants, down almost to the revolution of William and Mary, continued to drag to the stake or drive into exile the Anabaptists and Anians; and Calvin himself could instigate in the heat of passion, and afterwards justify in cold blood, the burning of Servetus, before a slow fire made of green wood. History is full of details of such outrages, committed, and to all appearances sincerely, on this same plea of conscience, a zeal for the truth and concern for souls. Admit it, therefore, in one instance, and where shall we stop? When urged and conducted as at the present day, I do not say that it is entitled to less regard than in the cases given above; but I ask for reasons to convince me that it is entitled to more.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

#### CONFIRMATION.

*To the Editors of Plain Truth.*—I rejoice that the veil has been rent, and a deep laid, and well-matured plot of the Presbyterian party, to acquire political ascendancy, has been stript of its secrecy and exposed to public criticism. The article headed "Murder will out," which you copied in your last number from the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, is true in every essential particular; but the disclosures are not so full as they might have been. I have been in possession of the facts in relation to this stupendous plot for nearly a year, and have often thought that duty to my fellow-countrymen required that I should make them public; but I have been deterred from so doing, by the fear that the boldness and magnitude of the scheme would excite doubts in the minds of some of its reality, and as it was conceived and nurtured in secret, I should be wanting in proof to substantiate the truth of my statements. But, happily, the veil has been rent, and I rejoice that there are more tongues than mine to proclaim the conspiracy, and warn my countrymen of the impending danger.

In the latter part of August, or fore part of September of last year, a travelling agent visited this part of the country, and delivered lectures to such as could safely be entrusted with the secret. He descanted at great

length upon the present condition of the press in this country, said it was under the control of men supporting no religious creed, that with this tremendous engine in their hands, they were enabled to give a wrong direction to public sentiment, and elevate such men only to power and office as accorded with them in opinion, &c. and concluded by proposing—

That a CENTRAL SOCIETY be established at Washington city, of a character both *political* and *religious*; that a fund be raised to be expended in printing books, tracts, and newspapers; that the central printing establishment be under the management of nine directors, a majority of whom should approve as well the matter which should appear in the national paper, as the books which should be published; and that newspapers, and bookstores, subordinate to the national institution, be established in all the cities and principle towns in the Union.

The books and papers thus published, he said, would not cost half as much as they now do; and, as the present publishers are not organized as a party, and cannot print so cheap, they could easily be broken down, and the country supplied with such newspapers, tracts, and books, only as should be approved as orthodox.

He said the project had been heartily approved in every part of the country he had visited; that upwards of \$300,000 had already been subscribed, and that the Society would be organized, and commence operations, so soon as \$500,000 should be raised. This plan he communicated under the strictest obligations of secrecy. It was approved by some to whom he submitted it, but not by all. I do not know how much money was subscribed in this place, but I have been informed that the great western *pioneer* of this religio-political party subscribed \$50.

By the proceedings of the Presbyterian convention which was held in this village on the 20th of August, you will perceive that some steps have already been taken to carry the above project into effect. That convention consisted of Presbyterian ministers from nearly every part of the state, and sat, I am informed, with *closed doors*.—Among the *published* proceedings, are the four following resolutions, dressed, you will see, in very *plausible* language:

*Resolved*, That the purity, prosperity, and glory of the Church, at this time, demand a *Monthly Journal*, in which the more distinguished truths of the gospel and doctrines of the Reformation shall be plainly exhibited and defended; and their paramount importance in the christian system maintained.

*Resolved*, That the publication of a series of *doctrinal Tracts*, of like character with the journal, is required by the exigencies of the times, which no existing institutions are prepared to supply.

*Resolved*, That the Rev. A. D. EDDY,\* of Canandaigua, C. Eddy, of Penn-Yan, H. P. Strong, of Phelps, Wm. WISNER,† of Ithaca, S. C. Aikin, J. F. Schermerhorn, of Utica, S. Van Vechten, of Schenectady, Joel Parker, of Rochester, John Frost, of Whitesborough, Dr G. SPRING,‡ of New-York, Dr. David Porter, of Cattskill, H. P. Dwight, of Geneva, Dr. Beeman, of Troy, George S. Boardman, of Watertown, S. H. Hotchkiss, of Prattsburgh, Joel Keep, of Homer, be a committee to see the above resolutions carried into effect.

\* Who lately brow-beat the Postmaster at Canandaigua, for allowing an obnoxious handbill to be posted up in his office.

† The general Agent of the National Union for enforcing the observance of the Sabbath, whose bold disclosure of the designs of his party, at Utica and Auburn, caused the great and patriotic meetings of the citizens of those places.

‡ The man who declared that the yellow fever in New-York, in 1824, was a judgment of God upon the people for their electing *irreligious* men to office.

*Resolved*, That this committee be requested to meet in the village of Utica, on Wednesday, the first of October next, at 10 o'clock, A. M. to devise means to secure the speedy publication of the above named Journal and Tracts.

Signed,

JOHN KEEP, Ch'n.

A. D. EDDY, Sec'y.

As my purpose was merely to corroborate the statement made in the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, I leave it for you, or your readers, to make such comments as the subject may suggest. D.

Auburn, Sept. 11, 1828.

The above disclosures furnish a key to the memorable declarations of *Dr. Ely*, at Philadelphia, and of *Mr. Wisner*, at Utica and Auburn. To doubt any longer that the ultimate purpose of all the national and auxiliary societies, and schemes of "benevolence" of the Presbyterians, is to invest themselves with a power, coequal with, if not superior to that of our present civil government, would be like doubting the existence of the earth on which we daily tread.

---

*Liberal Publications.*—In consequence of the increasing demand for the works published at our office, under the patronage of the *Free Press Association*, and of the difficulty in the country to procure these works, MR. BENJAMIN OFFEN has proceeded, as our accredited agent, to the northern and western parts of this state, with an ample supply, which he will dispose of at the New York prices. He is fully authorized to receive subscriptions for the *Correspondent*, and for the *Liberal Tracts*, on the terms already announced; and also to receive all monies due to, and on account of this establishment.

Mr. Offen intends to proceed as far as Buffalo, and to visit the intermediate places, where, we have no doubt, he will be received with that kindness and friendly feeling, so characteristic of liberal minds in all parts of our globe.—Should this trip prove as successful as the importance of the object leads us to expect, similar efforts will be made to disseminate correct principles throughout the United States.

---

*Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary.* We are now preparing for publication a stereotyped edition of this celebrated work, in one vol. 12 mo. embellished with a portrait of the author; price 75 cents in boards; or \$1, neatly half bound and gilt. As the work is considerably advanced, we calculate on having it ready for delivery on the 1st of November.

---

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### ORIGIN OF RELIGIOUS PLAYS,

[CONTINUED.]

The first dramatic representation in Italy was a spiritual comedy, performed at Padua in 1243; and there was a company instituted at Rome in 1264, whose chief employment was to represent the sufferings of Christ in Passion week. The Rev. Mr. Croft, and the Hon. Topham Beauclerc, collected a great number of these Italian plays of mysteries;



and at the sale of their libraries, Dr. Burney purchased many of the most ancient, which he speaks of as being evidently much earlier than the discovery of printing, from the gross manner in which the subjects are treated, the coarseness of the dialogue, and the ridiculous situation into which most sacred persons and things are thrown.

In 1313, Philip the Fair gave the most sumptuous entertainment at Paris ever remembered in that city. Edward II, and his Queen Isabella, crossed over from England with a large retinue of nobility, and partook of the magnificent festivities. The pomp and profusion of the banquettings, the variety of the amusements, and the splendour of the costume were unsurpassed. On each of the eight days the princess and nobles changed their dresses three times; while the people were sometimes entertained with representations of the *Glory of the blessed*, at other times with the *Torments of the damned*, and various other spectacles. In 1402, by an edict of Charles VI. dated Dec. 4, the mystery of the conception, passion, and resurrection of Christ, was performed at St. Maur, about five miles from Paris. At the council of Constance, in the year 1417, the English fathers played the mystery of the massacre of the Holy Innocents. The mystery of the passion was performed on the entrance of the kings of France and England at Paris, on Dec. 1, 1420, in the street *Kalends*, before the Palace, upon a raised scaffold of one hundred paces in length.

In the Royal Library of Paris, No. 4350, is *Le Mystere de la passion Jesus Christ*; Paris, printed by Antoine Verard, 1490, folio. This is a fine copy on vellum with every page richly illuminated, and containing a MS. note in French, purporting to be an extract from an old chronicle, entitled, "Histoire de Metz veritable," whence it appears that its performance was attended by many foreign lords and ladies whose names are specified, and that there were lanthorns placed in the windows during the whole time of the plays; but the most curious part of the MS. note, is that, "in the year 1437, on the 3d of July was represented the game or play, *de la Passion*, N. S. in the plain of Vexmiel, when the park was arranged in a very noble manner, for there were nine ranges of seats in height rising by degrees; all around and behind were great and long seats for the lords and ladies. On the stage was represented the mouth of hell, it is described as having been very well done, for that it opened and shut when the devils required to enter and come out, and had two large eyes of steel."

On the 27th of May, 1509, was performed at Romans, in Dauphiny, before the Cordelier's church, the *Mystery of the Three Dons*. In this religious play, which lasted three days, there are emissaries who undertake very long journeys, and must come back before the play can be ended. The scene, besmeared with the blood of the three martyrs, the Dons, is sometimes at Rome, sometimes at Vienna, soon after at Lyons, and at other times in the Alps. The stage constantly represents hell and paradise; and Europe, Asia and Africa, are cantoned in three towers. Some metaphysical beings are most curiously personified. Dame Silence, for instance, speaks the prologue; Human Succour, Divine Grace, and Divine Comfort, are the supporters of the heroes and heroines of the piece, while hell exhibits monsters and devils, to frighten the

audience. They are constantly abusing Proserpine, who is introduced with all the trappings of Tartarean pomp into the performance, where there no less than ninety-two dramatis personæ, and amongst whom are the Virgin and God the Father.

The story of *Le Mystere du Chevalier qui donne sa Femme au Diable*, played by ten persons in 1505, is of a dissipated knight reduced by his profligacy to distress and wickedness. In his misfortunes the devil appears, and proposes to make him richer than ever, if he will assign his wife, that the devil may have her in seven years. After some discussion the knight consents, his promise is written out, and he signs it with his blood. The seducer then stipulates that his victim shall deny his God ; the knight stoutly resists for a time, but in the end the devil gains his point, and emboldened by success ventures to propose that the knight shall deny the Virgin Mary. This, however, being a still greater sin, he refuses to commit it with the utmost indignity and vehemence, and the devil walks off baffled. At the end of seven years, the promise being due, the devil presents it to the knight, who, considering it a debt of honor, prepares to discharge it immediately. He orders his wife to follow him to a certain spot, but on her way she perceives a church, which after obtaining her husband's permission she enters, for the purpose of offering her devotion ; while thus engaged, the Virgin Mary recollecting the knight's unsullied allegiance to her, assumes the semblance of his wife, and in that character joins him. The moment that they both appear before the devil, he perceives who he has to deal with, and upbraids the unconscious knight for attempting to deceive him. The knight protests his ignorance and astonishment, which the Virgin corroborates, by telling the devil it was her own plan, for the rescue of two souls from his power, and she orders him to give up the knight's promise. He of course obeys so high an authority, and runs off in great terror. The Virgin exhorts the knight to better conduct in future, restores his wife to him, and the piece concludes.

In the reign of Francis I., 1541, the performance of a grand mystery of the *Acts of the Apostles*, was proclaimed with great solemnity, and acted at Paris for many successive days, before the nobility, clergy and a large assemblage in the Hotel de Flandres. These plays, written in French rhyme, by the brothers Greban, were printed in 2 vols. folio, black letter, under letters patent of the king to William Alabat, a merchant of Bourges. The dramatis personæ, were a multitude of celestial, terrestrial, and infernal personages, amounting altogether to four hundred and eighty-five characters. Though the scenes of these plays were chiefly scriptural, yet many were from apochryphal story, and the whole exhibition was a strange mixture of sacred and profane history.

[To be Continued.]

*The Jesuits.*—What the Jesuits have been, we shall very briefly show. It is known that Henry the III, of France, was not a favourite with the order of the Jesuits ; and, although they were no strangers to using the secret dagger, yet they thought they might go more openly to work with this monarch, and even justify regicide. The subject was discussed in the Sorbonne, whether or not the French might lawfully take up arms against this king ; and, after a mature deliberation of the doctors assembled, to the

number of seventy, and having heard several different reasons drawn, principally from the *holy* Scriptures, as well as from the *holy* canons and the decrees of the pontiffs, it was concluded by the president of the same faculty, without one dissentient voice, and this in the form of council, to remove the scruples of the said people—first, The people of this kingdom and released from the oath of fidelity taken to King Henry. —Also, the said people may, in safety of conscience, arm, unite, raise money, and contribute towards the defence and preservation of the Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion, against the horrible projects and attempts of the said king and his adherents, since he has violated the public faith, to the prejudice of the said Catholic religion, the edict of the holy union, and the natural liberty of the convocation of the states.—Farther, the said faculty of Paris has deemed it proper to send these conclusions to the pope, that he may deign to approve and confirm them by the authority of the holy apostolic see, and by this means succur the Gallican church, which is in the greatest danger.

The crime of Henry III. against the Jesuits was, that he had refused to establish the inquisition in France; and at Blois, in 1588, he dared thus to allude to the crimes of the clergy;—"His majesty demands from the clergy, since they are charged with the reformation of others, to begin by reforming their own lives, and give a good example to the other orders of the state." This was not borne by insolent facetious Jesuits; they established an *imperium in imperio*; they not only pretended to owe no allegiance themselves to the sovereign, but they engaged the whole nation to perjure themselves, and take up arms against him; and, that no scruple whatever might remain in the minds of the ignorant and superstitious, they engaged to send their decisions to Rome, to have the authority and approbation of the pope. The principle, therefore, of absolving a nation from its allegiance, was considered to be a principle of the Romish Church. The Jesuits, indeed, knew that their doctrine would receive a full sanction from that pope who, the preceding year, had pretended, by a bull, to lay all England under an interdiction, and to declare Queen Elizabeth an usurper, a heretic, and excommunicated, and ordered the English to join the Spaniards to dethrone her, promising a great reward to those who would secure her person, and deliver her up to the Catholics, to punish her for her crimes.

The Jesuits, of France, absolved the people from their allegiance on the 7th of January, 1589; and, on the 31st of July following, the same Jesuits, not content with preaching the doctrine of assassination, seized the dagger, and plunged it into the heart of the sovereign. The news of the murder of Henry III. was received with transport at Rome: Jacques Clement was called the "blessed" by the pope himself, whose Christian charity refused that a funeral service should be performed for the repose of the soul of the assassinated king. Yet history tells us, that this pope, Sixtus V. though he sanctioned the crimes of the Jesuits, when in accordance with his own principles, abhorred and detested them as incorrigibly wicked and criminal. When pressed to choose his confessor out of their society, he said, "It would be more proper that I should confess the Jesuits than choose them for my confessors."

Sensible men see, in the Jesuits of 1828, the Jesuits of 1589, 1610,

1757, 1758, and 1774; they do not forget that Jaques Clement, Ravillac, and Damiens, were the organs of the Jesuits, and that all their crimes followed close upon measures taken to curb their pride; they do not forget that the Jesuits, Malagrida, Alexander, and Mathos, decided that it was not even a venial sin to kill one's lawful sovereign, and that shortly after the King of Portugal was assassinated, the regicides having first obtained of their Jesuit confessors absolution for the crime they were going to commit. In fine, it cannot be forgotten, that when Clement XIV. suppressed the order of the Jesuits, "I will do it," said he, (*ma questa suppressione mi dara la morte*) "but this suppression will procure my death;" and that the event followed close on the prediction. Nay, so well practised are the Jesuits in the art of assassination, that they could even fix the period when a slow poison would be mortal; they placarded the pontifical palace with the letters *I. S. S. S. V.—In September Sara Sede Vacante*—"In September the holy see will be vacant;" and, on the 22d of the same month, the pope died of the effects of the poison they had administered.

In short, the Jesuits—for their principles are unchanged—profess regicide, and teach it by precept and example; the Jesuits, in the space of little more than two hundred years, have assassinated four Catholic kings, and poisoned one pope; and yet this is a society whose atrocities it is attempted to revive in France, and for attacking which the vengeance of the French tribunals has been invoked, though happily without effect.

#### AGENTS FOR THE CORRESPONDENT.

*Philadelphia, Pa.* Mr. John Turner, 134 Market Street.

*Cincinnati, O.* Mr. Robert L. Jennings.

*Kendal, O.* Mr. Matthew Macey.

*Paterson, N. J.* Mr. Robert Chiswell.

*Portsmouth, N. H.* Mr. John Webster.

*Red Hook, N. Y.* Erastus Marshal.

*Hudson, N. Y.* Moses Younglove.

*Utica, N. Y.* D. J. Morris.

*Wilmington, De.* Henry Heald.

The friends of liberal principles throughout the United States, are respectfully requested to accept of the Agency of the *Correspondent*: Three volumes are now completed, and sets can be had from the commencement, at the original Subscription price, [\$1 50, a volume.]

The following works are sold at the Office of the *Correspondent*.

*ECCE HOMO*; or a Critical Inquiry into the History of Jesus of Nazareth, 12mo. bds 75 cents—bound and gilt, \$1.

*VOLNEY'S RUINS OF EMPIRES*; with the *LAW OF NATURE*; a new translation, with plates, 8vo, bound and gilt, \$1 25: also, 12mo, bds, 75 cents.

*AGE OF REASON*, pocket edition, with plates, 37 1-2 cents.

*THE GOD OF THE JEWS AND CHRISTIANS!* Embellished with a correct likeness, [coloured] 25 cents.

*Free Press Association.*—The meetings of the Association are now held in the *Temple of Science*, (formerly the Bethel Academy) Elizabeth-Street, between Houston and Bleecker-streets. A *Theological* lecture will be delivered on Sunday, (to-morrow) the 28th instant, at 4 o'clock, afternoon.

The *CORRESPONDENT* is published by *GEORGE HOUSTON, & CO.* at No. 6 William-Street, nearly opposite Beaver-Street, at THREE DOLLARS per annum, in advance.